

**Editorial note:** For the President's remarks of Jan. 5, 1990, on signing Proclamation 6087, see the *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* (vol. 26, p. 19). For the text of the President's letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President of the Senate, dated Jan. 5, 1990, on the granting of a special trade status within the GSP to Poland, see the *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents*, (vol. 26, p. 21).

## Proclamation 6088 of January 9, 1990

### Martin Luther King, Jr., Federal Holiday, 1990

*By the President of the United States of America*  
*A Proclamation*

As we observe a national holiday in honor of the birthday of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., we celebrate a life dedicated to the struggle for racial equality and justice. With determination, courage, and a firm commitment to nonviolence, Dr. King worked to free men and women throughout the United States from "the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination."

Martin Luther King, Jr., loved this country and firmly believed in the timeless ideal expressed in its Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." Knowing that "a house divided against itself cannot stand," Dr. King devoted his life to striving for racial unity and equality in the United States. He believed our Nation had strayed from the noble course set in our Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, and he was determined to see that America remain faithful to the principles they enshrine.

In his words and deeds, Martin Luther King, Jr., reminded all Americans of the stern admonition issued by Abraham Lincoln in 1858, when he warned the people of Edwardsville, Illinois, of the tragic consequences that continued tolerance of slavery could hold for the United States. President Lincoln, like great Americans of all generations, knew that our Nation's strength lies in the conviction that every human being is of inestimable worth and that the only legitimate end of government is to protect the God-given rights of each individual. "Destroy this spirit," Lincoln warned, "and you have planted the seeds of despotism at your own doors. Familiarize yourselves with the chains of bondage and you prepare your own limbs to wear them. Accustomed to trample on the rights of others, you have lost the genius of your own independence and become the fit subjects of the first cunning tyrant who rises among you."

Like President Lincoln, Martin Luther King, Jr., knew that the United States could not remain a free and great nation so long as the rights of any individual are denied. He knew that America's promise of freedom and justice for all is rooted in the magnificent design of our Creator, and he knew that this promise must not be distorted or destroyed by bigotry and discrimination.

Dr. King told us that he had a dream. We see now that it was not just a dream but a vision. Recalling the Proverb that states "where there is no vision, the people perish," Dr. King shared with us his hope and

foresight. He had "seen the promised land," and he inspired each of us to view it with him.

Today, even though many of the darkest "clouds of racial prejudice" have been dispersed, even though we are closer to that day when people "will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character," we must continue working to promote racial unity and equal opportunity in the United States. This is our solemn duty—and it is the greatest honor we can give to the memory of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

By Public Law 98-144, the third Monday in January of each year has been designated as a legal public holiday in honor of the "Birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE BUSH, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim Monday, January 15, 1990, as the Martin Luther King, Jr., Federal Holiday.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this ninth day of January, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and fourteenth.

GEORGE BUSH

**Editorial note:** For the President's remarks of Jan. 9, 1990, on signing Proclamation 6088, see the *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* (vol. 26, p. 31).

#### **Proclamation 6089 of January 16, 1990**

#### **National Poison Prevention Week, 1990**

*By the President of the United States of America*  
*A Proclamation*

Since its inception 29 years ago, "National Poison Prevention Week" has encouraged the American people to take measures to prevent childhood poisonings. Today we know that this important public awareness campaign has helped save lives. According to data gathered by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, approximately 450 children under 5 years of age died in 1961 after accidentally ingesting medicines or household chemicals. During 1987, the most recent year for which complete statistics are available, 31 deaths from accidental poisoning occurred among children—a 93 percent decrease.

Efforts to promote public awareness, coupled with educational programs for parents and the use of child-resistant packaging, have played a major role in the reduction of poisoning deaths. Offering lifesaving advice and information over the telephone, the Nation's Poison Control Centers have also helped prevent many serious injuries and deaths among children.

While many tragic deaths have been prevented in recent years, we still have much work to do. Each year, more than half a million children are